SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEDULED TRIBES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is a unique country that possesses diverse languages, religions, races, and Caste and cultural groups. The caste system is a prominent and peculiar form of social stratification found in India, which the Vedic Varna system has fostered throughout the ages. India is the homeland of numerous tribal communities with diverse ecological, cultural, socio-economic, and geographical backgrounds. These individuals are classified as "Scheduled Tribes" under the Indian Constitution. One of the most neglected and economically disadvantaged communities in India is the Scheduled Tribe people.

To consider society as a just society, all individuals must be equal before the law and have equal opportunities for participation in its governance and socio-economic development. Unfortunately, in India, a large section of the people, even after several decades of development, still suffer from the humiliation of social exclusion, economic deprivation, political segregation and oppression. There is thus an immense need to empower the underprivileged people, especially Scheduled Tribes, in all aspects of life. India has the second-largest concentration of tribal populations in the world, next to Africa. In India, there are approximately 350 Scheduled Tribes (sub-tribes are numerous), and they speak more than 100 languages. Tribes have distinct characteristics that set them apart from others. They are simple people with exotic customs, traditions, and practices that have been passed down for centuries, living a life of geographical isolation.

Tribes are India's indigenous people who inhabit a range of ecological and geoclimatic environments, from plains and forests to highlands and remote areas, according to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2013). Tribes are one of the vulnerable sections in the country. Both the Central and State governments have implemented policies aimed at the socio-economic empowerment of tribes (Karnataka Human Development Report, 2005), but these policies have not fully benefited the tribes. They are isolated from the mainstream population, and the forest occupies a central position in the tribal economy and society (Tribal Health Bulletin, 2014). Scheduled tribes are economically the weakest and historically subjected to Discrimination and deprivation. Disparities in living conditions persist between tribal and non-tribal communities, and the Government's policies have not improved the living standards of tribal communities (Kijima, Y., 2016). They experience deprivation in their socio-economic status, and they live with a lack of education, poor sanitation and health conditions, a poor lifestyle, and poverty. The condition of scheduled tribes in Karnataka is not significantly different from that of other tribes in the state, yet they remain economically, socially, and politically backwards. With this

background, an attempt is made here to study the socio-economic conditions of scheduled tribes and their empowerment across subcastes in Dakshina Kannada District.

1.0 THE MEANING AND DEFINITION OF THE TRIBES:

Social thinkers considered the tribe as a social group, typically with a distinct area, dialect, cultural heritage, and unifying social organisation. It can include several subgroups, such as clans or sibs. A tribe ordinarily has an ancestor and a patron deity.

A collection of families with a common name, a standard dialect, and the occupation or claim to occupy a known territory is referred to as a "tribe" in the Imperial Gazetteer of India. They are often not endogamous, though they may have been at one point. According to Ralph Linton, a "tribe" is a collection of bands that live in one or more adjacent regions and share a sense of solidarity stemming from their shared cultural experiences, regular interactions, and a common interest in a particular area.

According to D. N. Majumdar (1927), a "tribe" is a social group that has territorial affiliation, is endogamous, lacks specialised functions, is governed by tribal officers, whether they are hereditary or not, is united in language or dialect, recognises social distance from other tribes or castes, and maintains tribal traditions, beliefs, and customs. It is also illiberal to naturalise ideas from outside sources, and, most importantly, to be mindful of the homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN INDIA

Thirty States and UTs have notified Scheduled Tribes, and 705 distinct ethnic groups, etc., have been designated as Scheduled Tribes. According to the 2011 census, there are approximately 10.43 crore tribal people in the nation, accounting for 8.6% of the overall population. Of them, 10.03% reside in cities and 89.97% in rural areas. Between the 2001 Census and 2011, the tribes' decadal population growth was 23.66%, compared to an overall population growth of 17.69%. In the general population, there are 940 females for every 1,000 males, whereas among the Scheduled Tribes, the ratio is 990 females for every 1,000 males.

1.2 KARNATAKA STATE SCENARIO

The state has a sizeable chunk of the tribal population. According to the 2011 Census report, a majority of the tribes in Karnataka constitute the workforce in agriculture, cottage, industry and other unorganised sectors. The Department of Tribal Welfare was established to address the specific needs of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Karnataka.

Karnataka's Scheduled Tribe population accounts for 4.1 per cent of India's total Scheduled Tribe population, and their proportion to the state's total population is 6.95 per cent. The Tribal population of Karnataka increased to 42,48,987 in 2011 from 34,63,986 in 2001, registering a decennial growth rate of 22.66 per cent. The percentage growth rate is higher for females (23.80%) than for males (21.55%).

1.2.1 MAJOR SCHEDULED TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

The prominent tribes of Karnataka include – Adiyan, Barda, Bavacha, Bamcha, Bhil, Bhil Garasia, sholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, DungriGarasia, Mewasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Tadvi Bhil, Bhagalia, Bhilala, Pawra, Vasava, Vasave, Chenchu, Chenchwar, Chodhara, Dubla, Talavia, Halpati, Gamit, Gamta, Gavit, Mavchi, Padvi, Valvi, Goud, Naikpod, Rajgond, Gowdalu, Hakkipikki, Hasalaru, Irular, Iruliga, JenuKuruba, KaduKuruba, Kammara, Kanivan, Kanyan, Kathodi, Katkari, DhorKathodi, DhorKatkari, SonKathodi, Son Katkari, Kattunayakan, Kokna, Kokni, Kukna, KoliDhor, TokreKoli, Kolcha, Kolgha, KondaKapus, Koraga, Kota, Koya, BhineKoya, Rajkoya, KudiyamMelekudi, Kuruba, Kurumans, MahaMalasar, Malaikudi, Malasar, Malayekandi, Maleru, Maratha, Marati, Meda, Naikda, Nayaka, CholliyalaNayaka, KapadiaNayaka, MotaNayaka, Nana, Nayaka, NaikNayak, Beda, Bedar, Valmiki, Palliyan, Paniyan, Pardhi, Advichincher, Phase Pardhi, Patelia, Rathawa, Sholaga, Soligaru, Toda, Varli, Vitolia, kotwalia, barodia, Yerava and Siddi.

1.3 SCHEDULED TRIBES COMMUNITY SCENARIO IN DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT

Dakshina Kannada (South Canara) is the southernmost coastal district of Karnataka State, covering an area of 4,859 sq. km. The sea bounds the district to the West, the Western Ghats to the East, the Udupi district to the North, and Kerala state to the South. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the total population in Dakshina Kannada is 20,89,649, out of which 10,93,563 people reside in rural areas and the remaining 9,96,086 people live in urban areas. Out of the total population of Dakshina Kannada district, scheduled tribes contribute 82,268. Of this,

65,844 tribal people reside in rural areas and 16,424 in urban areas within the district. Kammara, Koraga, Malekudiya, Maleyakandi, Marati, and Paniyan are the major tribes found in various parts of the Dakshina Kannada district.

1.3.1 POPULATION SIZE OF MAJOR SCHEDULED TRIBE COMMUNITIES IN DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT

Sub Castes / Taluks	Marati	Malekudiya	Koraga	Total
Mangalore	12782 (18.33%)	58 (0.75%)	3406 (70.11%)	16246 (19.74%)
Bantwala	19916 (28.56%)	424 (5.51%)	572 (11.77%)	20912 (25.41%)
Puttur	16759 (24.03%)	472 (6.14%)	396 (8.15%)	17627 (21.42%)
Belthangadi	9509 (13.63%)	5750 (74.83%)	383 (7.88%)	15642 (19.01%)
Sullia	10760 (15.43%)	980 (12.75%)	101 (2.07%)	11841 (14.39%)
Dakshina Kannada	69726 (100%)	7684 (100%)	4858 (100%)	82268 (100%)

Source: Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat, Mangaluru

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review is essentially a critical, comprehensive, and objective overview of the existing research pertinent to the topic. There are various types of literature reviews, but the most common are traditional or narrative literature reviews and systematic literature reviews. We have followed both of these. In a traditional literature review, we employed theoretical, conceptual, general, and methodological reviews, which provide critical insights into the current knowledge on the topic. For this purpose, we have used quantitative conceptual papers.

Currently, a substantial amount of research is produced annually, and as a result, conflicting findings are also prevalent. These study differences could be due to the way the study design was conducted, or it could be due to the specific design of the study, or mainly because of the variation in the sample taken for the study. It is in these situations that SLR becomes of utmost

importance. SLR finds, picks, and evaluates research to provide answers to queries. It follows a clearly defined protocol or plan, where the criteria are set before the review is conducted. We conduct a comprehensive and transparent search across multiple databases and grey Literature that can be replicated and reproduced by other researchers.

In this literature review, the author searched for specific research articles using various keywords. The author aimed to select only quantitative research articles for the study. The literature review has been conducted systematically. A total of 125 quantitative research articles were selected for the review, and the rest were rejected because they did not meet the criteria of a systematic literature review.

The Literature is devided into following areas; They are as follows:

Sl. No	Review Head	Numbers
1	Concept of Scheduled Tribes	10
2	Exclusion of Scheduled Tribes	09
3	Discrimination against Scheduled Tribes	13
4	Socio-Economic Condition of Scheduled Tribes	43
5	Impact of Government Schemes on Scheduled Tribes	11
6	Health condition of Scheduled Tribes	16
7	Education Status of Scheduled Tribes	10
8	Financial Inclusion of Scheduled Tribes	07
9	Status of Tribal Women	06
Total		125

Source: Author's Own

In India, the two most disadvantaged groups are the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Both groups encounter Discrimination in all spheres of life. However, in recent days, discrimination has also been experienced in opportunities and participation levels. The study of Virginius shows that a comparative analysis between Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reveals a decline in the number of Scheduled Tribes in the service sector and the education field. Even though the Government facilitated education facilities, it is found that the participation of scheduled tribes is poorer than that of the scheduled castes. Discrimination is also practised by the upper caste in various aspects to some extent. Poverty is very high

among the scheduled tribes. Most of the tribal families in India are living below the poverty line. **(Xaxa, 2001)**

Hall et al., with an emphasis on the Scheduled Tribes of India, present the research article "Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development," which offers a thorough examination of the socio-economic challenges faced by indigenous groups worldwide. It examines the structural marginalisation, historical background, and how development policies impact these individuals. Inequalities in economic, health, and educational prospects are highlighted in the report, underscoring the need for inclusive policies that uphold indigenous rights and promote sustainable development. The paper emphasises the significance of culturally sensitive approaches to poverty reduction and Indigenous peoples' empowerment by examining a variety of case studies and statistical data **(Hall et al., 2014).**

Jenu Kurubas are a Scheduled Tribe in the state of Karnataka. The article "Social Exclusion and Deprivation of Scheduled Tribes: The Case of Jenu Kurubas in Kodagu District of Karnataka" (2016) examines the various forms of deprivation and systemic exclusion that they face. The study emphasises how social, economic, and political marginalisation impede development and prolong poverty by highlighting their historical reliance on woods and traditional honey collection. Illiteracy, poor health, exploitation, and a lack of sustainable livelihoods are significant problems exacerbated by inefficient government actions and limited access to resources. The study promotes participative macro-level solutions that incorporate economic, social, and cultural components to enhance participation while criticising current poverty alleviation programs for their insufficient targeting. It demands all-encompassing, creative solutions to the systemic obstacles preventing the Jenu Kurubas from being empowered by assimilation into the general population. **(Thapa & Malini, 2016).**

Dharmesh investigates the economic impact of financial inclusion on scheduled tribal farmers by conducting interviews with 120 tribal farmers from the Dang, Tapi, and Valsad districts of Gujarat state. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the age of the account holder borrowing from the bank and the financial assistance from the Government. The results further show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between savings and crop output levels. They show evidence that there is no significant relationship between savings and personal investment, indicating that an increase in savings habits has not led to a rise in investments among the scheduled tribes**. (Thakor & Prusty, 2017)**

Karthikeyan randomly interviewed 120 tribal population samples from the Jawadhu Hills in Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu, to analyse the expenditure and per capita income of Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) tribes. The result shows that 70% of the tribal population was living below the poverty line. The food and non-food expenditure is higher among scheduled tribes living below the poverty line compared to those living above the poverty line. The result also shows the migration of scheduled tribes towards Chennai, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala for construction and farming work. He suggested activating livelihood development programmes from local bodies. **(Karthikeyan E, 2017)**

Abhishek analysed the economic status of tribal fishermen by using input-output analysis. The correlation and Linear regression Model is used to estimate the correlations of the variables and to estimate the regression equation. The results show that the independent variable is positively correlated with netting during culture and total input, and negatively correlated with total output and labour charge. ii) The transport has a positive correlation with Row cow dung, total input and total output. It negatively correlated with medicine, labour charges, harvesting costs and the netting during culture. iii) The variable "row cow dung" has a significant positive association with harvesting cost, total input, and total output; it is negatively correlated with labour charge and netting during culture. iv) Netting during culture is significantly positively correlated with medicine, and it is negatively correlated with harvesting cost, total input, total output and labour charge. v) The variable labour charge has significantly positively correlated with total input, harvesting cost and total output. vi) The variable harvesting cost has a significantly positive correlation with total output and total input. The result of the regression equation indicates the results of total input and total output. The result shows that the variable 'cow dung' has more importance and has negatively impacted the total input, while positively impacting the total output. They conclude by suggesting proper training, financial help and monitoring of government schemes to bring changes in the lives of the scheduled tribes. **(Abhishek Majhi, Dr. Subhasis Bhattacharya, 2018)**

The study by Ravikumar explained the development of scheduled tribes using the Indian census reports and the Development Report from 1981 to 2011. He used variables such as population, sex ratio, literacy, work rate participation, and basic amenities. The results show that the population size and literacy ratio of the scheduled tribes have improved from 1981 to 2011. The result further indicates that occupationally, the scheduled tribes are mainly workers, agricultural labourers, cultivators, and marginal workers. Along with this, he suggested the implementation of employment programmes, as well as programmes for a better standard of

living, including housing and water facilities. He concludes that scheduled tribes are suffering from a lack of basic needs, and their status is unsatisfactory compared to non-tribes. **(Ravikumar, 2018)**

Deo comparatively analysed how scheduled tribes and non-scheduled tribes experienced their quality of life with emotional reactions and cognitive judgement. He purposively selected 30 scheduled tribes and 30 non-scheduled tribes from the Mayurbhanj district for the primary data. A T-test is used to estimate the comparison of two groups. The results show a significant difference between the scheduled tribes and non-scheduled tribes in subjective well-being. This indicates that subjective well-being is statistically at a high level among the non-scheduled tribes compared to the scheduled tribes. He concludes by suggesting that the Government should take the initiative of providing basic facilities so that they can lead a better life. **(Deo, 2020)**

Hussain surveyed 300 scheduled tribe women from the Kargil district of the Jammu and Kashmir state to analyse their social status and their social problems. He concludes that women in the Dard tribe are socio-economically very backwards. For a long time, they have suffered from a high rate of illiteracy, poverty, backwardness, a very low status of education and a lack of awareness of the various government programmes and policies made for their upliftment; they don't even actively participate in the development process due to these constraints. He further suggests the need for support of economic, educational and health measures to face the problems. **(Hussain, 2020)**

2.1 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 offers a comprehensive examination of the socio-economic conditions and empowerment issues faced by Scheduled Tribes (STs) across various regions in India. The reviewed studies highlight that, despite efforts through constitutional provisions, government policies, and development schemes aimed at uplifting tribal communities, significant disparities persist. Many tribal groups continue to lag in education, healthcare, economic development, and political representation. Studies consistently point to structural exclusion, social stigma, and Discrimination—both from mainstream society and within tribal communities themselves—as significant barriers to empowerment.

Notably, the review underscores how tribal women often face double marginalisation—first due to their tribal identity and second due to gender, further restricting their access to education,

decision-making, and economic independence. While some research reveals positive trends in literacy and awareness among younger generations, a common finding is the limited success of welfare programs due to poor implementation, lack of understanding, and socio-cultural rigidity. Several studies also emphasise the importance of localised, community-specific approaches rather than one-size-fits-all policies. Moreover, a gap exists in participatory development and active tribal involvement in governance structures.

The review concludes that for meaningful socio-economic empowerment, mere economic assistance is insufficient; interventions must also address the deeply rooted social inequalities, increase political participation, and ensure culturally sensitive education and health services. It also calls for future research to focus on comparative analyses between different tribal groups, gendered perspectives within tribes, and the collection of more empirical data on the long-term outcomes of government schemes. Overall, the literature underscores the pressing need for integrated, inclusive, and community-centred models of development to achieve sustainable empowerment for India's Scheduled Tribes.

3. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Numerous studies on various aspects of the socio-economic circumstances of scheduled tribes in India and Karnataka have been conducted, according to the literature review. Additionally, several studies have been undertaken in the Dakshina Kannada district regarding the various aspects of tribal populations. However, most studies have discussed the socio-economic conditions of scheduled tribes, their backwardness, and the vulnerability of scheduled tribes, particularly the Koraga tribes. Few researchers have explored the socio-economic conditions of the Malekudiya and Jenu Kuruba. Still, even fewer have studied the conditions of the Marati tribe in Dakshina Kannada district, which is one of the prominent groups among the scheduled tribes. Additionally, there is no comparative analysis of the Socio-Economic conditions of all tribes in the district. The present study aims to fill this research gap.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION

The researcher poses the following research questions after reviewing the literature above.

1. What socio-economic traits set tribal tribes apart from society, or make them extremely backward?

2. To what extent have the government schemes/programmes succeeded in improving the economic and social conditions of scheduled tribes?

3. What percentages of the tribal population engage in the Industrial and Service sector compared to the non-tribal population?

4. Is the tribal population socially and economically empowered, and particularly, are tribal women economically empowered?

5. Is the condition of the tribal population better in the Dakshina Kannada district compared to other parts of Karnataka?

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The following are the essential objectives of the study.

1. To examine the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Tribes across subcastes in the study area.
2. To review the government schemes and programmes for the development of scheduled tribes by the central Government and the state government of Karnataka.
3. To analyse the impact of Government Schemes/Programmes on the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes across subcastes in the study area.
4. To analyse the problems and challenges faced by the scheduled tribes in the study area.
5. To suggest policy implications and measures for uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district.

6. HYPOTHESES

H_1: The socio-economic condition of the scheduled tribe community in Dakshina Kannada is not satisfactory.

H_2: The level of awareness among scheduled tribe communities regarding government developmental schemes in the Dakshina Kannada district is not comprehensive.

H_3: The awareness and utilisation of various government schemes among the scheduled tribe community positively influence their socio-economic empowerment.

H_4: The socio-economic condition of the Marati tribe is better compared to that of otherscheduled tribes.

H_5: Education, Health, and economic hindrances among scheduled tribes negatively impact the utilisation of various government schemes.

H_6: Discrimination among Scheduled Tribes dampens the positive relationship between Utilisation and socio-economic empowerment.

7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The current study is multi-faceted in that it examines the socio-economic background of the tribal respondents, who are members of the Marati, Koraga, and Malekudiya tribal communities in the Dakshina Kannada district, as well as the effects of empowerment programs on the standard of living of the tribal population. The study also examines the effectiveness of tribal empowerment initiatives in the research region. Analysing the socio-economic standing of tribes, determining the causes of their underdevelopment, and formulating plans to assist them in improving would all benefit from the study's conclusions.

8. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is undertaken in Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka, for an in-depth analysis of issues related to the socio-economic empowerment of Scheduled Tribes. To investigate the above objectives and verify the hypotheses at the field level, the study is based on both primary data and secondary data, which is supported by other analytical and empirical studies concerning the topic.

PRIMARY DATA

The present study collected primary data through a structured questionnaire, which was administered to respondents in the study area.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data has also been collected through various published sources. Articles, magazines, theses, newspapers, and other sources have been surveyed from Google Scholar, SSRN, Elsevier, Shodhganga, Emerald, Taylor & Francis. Additionally, many journals and articles have been referenced from Scopus-indexed and UGC CARE-listed journals.

9. VARIABLES/FACTORS USED IN THE STUDY

The research questionnaire for the socio-economic empowerment of scheduled tribes comprises various factors, and this study aims to assess the relationship between these constructs. A detailed description of these variables and characteristics is provided in the table below.

Table 1: Variables/Factors Used in Research Questionnaire

SL.No	Variables		
1	Sample Profile	Name	
		Gender	
		Age	
		Education	
		Marital Status	
		Occupation	
		Type of House	
		Facilities in-house	
		Source of drinking water	
2	Social Factors	Area	
		Type of Family	
		Ownership of House	
		Number of children	
		Beliefs in Customs and Traditions	
		Membership in Various groups	
3	Economic Factor	**No. of Factors**	**No. of Items**
		Source of Income	10
		Annual Income	05
		Source of Debt	08
		Reason for Debt	09
		Expenditureure	10
		Type of Ration Card	
		Total Size of Land	
4	Problems/Challenges	**No. of Factors**	**No. of Items**
		General Problemes	07
		Factors Affecting Poor Education	09
		Health Problems	06
		Challenges	11

		No. of Factors	No. of Items
5	Government Schemes	Reaction to Development Programme	11
		Reaction to Reservation Policy	05
		Government schemes and their benefits	05
		Changes in status through government schemes	20
		Awareness of government schemes	
		Satisfaction with government schemes	

10. SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

10.1 SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The present study was conducted in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state for in-depth analysis. The tribes, such as the Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga families, were settled in Udupi, Dakshina Kannada. According to the 2011 census, 13,103 tribal families reside in the Dakshina Kannada district, with a total population of 82,268. Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga are prominent scheduled tribes found in the Dakshina Kannada district.

10.2 SAMPLE SELECTION AND SAMPLE FRAMEWORK

A purposive and multi-stage stratified sampling technique is used to select the sample of scheduled tribe households. In the first stage, we selected the total population of Scheduled Tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district. In the second stage, we selected the taluk-wise population of Scheduled Tribes and their corresponding percentages. In the third stage, we selected the proportion of the sample at each taluk. The sample size for the study is calculated with Yamane's formula, which is given below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where,

N= Total Population

e= Margin of error

n= Sample size

Based on the above formula, a sample size of 400 was selected to facilitate better comparison with other tribes. We then selected 200 samples from the Malekudiya and 200 sample respondents from the Koraga tribes. A total of 800 sample respondents were selected.

According to the 2011 census, the Dakshina Kannada district comprises a total of five taluks, namely Bantwal, Belthangady, Mangalore, Puttur, and Sullia. The total Scheduled Tribe population in Dakshina Kannada district is 82,268, and the sample distribution among taluks is presented in the table below.

10.3 SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION AMONG TALUKS

	MARATI		**MALEKUDIYA**		**KORAGA**	
	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
Bantwala	19916	168 (42%)	424	11 (5%)	572	78 (39%)
Puttur	16759	140 (35%)	472	14 (7%)	396	56 (28%)
Belthangadi	9509	80 (20%)	5750	149 (75%)	383	54 (27%)
Sullia	1076	12 (3%)	980	26 (13%)	101	12 (6%)
Total	47260	400 (100%)	7626	200 (100%)	1452	200 (100%)

Source: Researcher's calculation

11. STATISTICAL ASSUMPTIONS

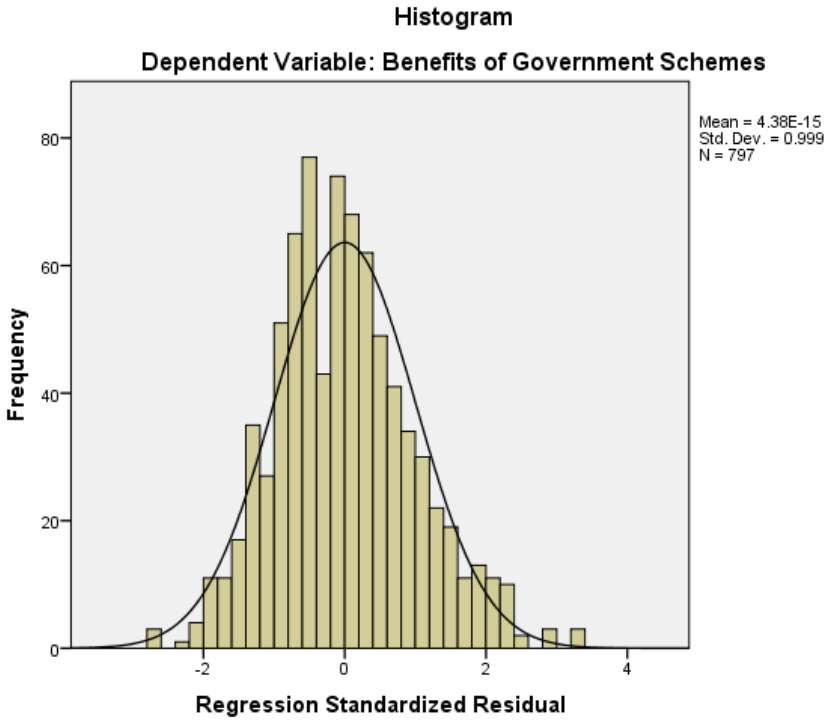
The gathered data must be assessed to verify whether it complies with the specified statistical assumptions, ensuring its appropriateness for use in various statistical research applications. The data were validated in the current inquiry using the hypotheses of normality, homogeneity, Linearity, and multicollinearity. Each of these suppositions is required for structural equation modelling (SEM). Linear and multicollinearity tests are needed to validate the assumption of regression analysis. It is necessary to confirm that the data have a normal distribution before performing a parametric or non-parametric test. Structural Equation Modelling was conducted using multiple regression analysis (SEM).

11.1 Normality

One essential step in using multiple statistical tests is the normality test. The normality of the data influences the validity tests. SEM and other statistical tests may be applied if it is determined that the data are typically distributed. The test findings become untrustworthy if it is discovered that the data is not normal; in this situation, a non-parametric test may be employed. Below is a list of the tests that were used in the current inquiry.

11.2 Histogram Test for Normality

The histogram test can also be used to determine whether a distribution is normal. Whether or not the distribution is bell-shaped can be determined by plotting the observed values against their frequency distribution. The bell-shaped plots indicate that the data comply with the assumption of normality.



The above figure clearly shows that the chosen variables exhibit a standard histogram curve. Thus, the data is consistent with the notion of normalcy.

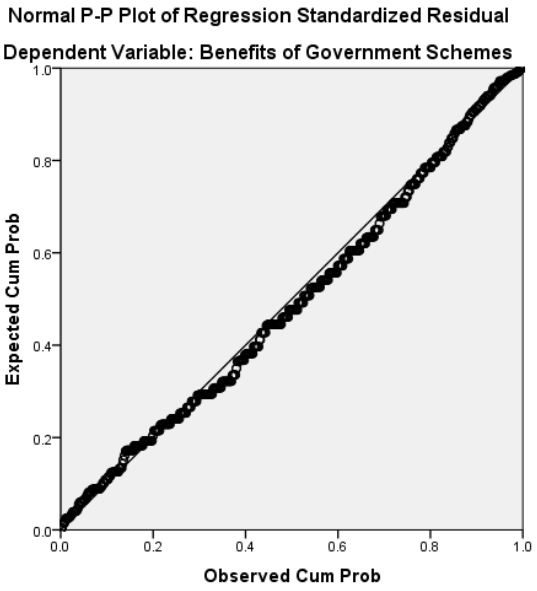
11.3 Homogeneity

In the current investigation, Levene statistics were used to analyse the homogeneity of the data. The null hypothesis is that variance will always be equal. This requires two sets of data, one with dependent variables and the other with factor variables. The demographic data were used as factor variables, and the construct variables were used as dependent variables. The Levene

statistic value should be greater than 0.5, and the p-value should be less than 0.05, indicating that the variances within the population distribution are equal.

11.4 Linearity

The linearity test is crucial for verifying whether the basic assumptions of the regression analysis are valid. Regression analysis describes the linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. A scatter plot can be used to understand the linear relationship between two variables (government actions, economic barriers, awareness, Utilisation, Discrimination, education, and health). Benefits of government schemes as the dependent variable in this case, with socio-economic empowerment factors as the independent variables.



The above figure demonstrates that the drawn line is linear. The linearity assumption was satisfied, and a linear relationship between the two variables was formed.

12. DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

Based on the objectives, responses were coded and input into the program. The data evaluation tool of choice is SPSS Version 21. The study used percentages, cumulative percentages, standard deviations, ranges, and means as descriptive statistics. The data that were gathered were examined using a variety of statistical methods, including:

1. Reliability Test and Validity,

2. Percentage Analysis,

3. Descriptive Analysis,

4. Fisher's Exact Test or Chi-Square test

5. Friedman test

6. Independent sample t-test,

7. One-way ANOVA

8. Correlation Analysis,

9. Simple Regression Analysis,

10. Multiple Regression Analysis,

11. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and

12. SEM for Path Analysis

Explanation of the various analyses used

The primary information obtained from the questionnaire was tabulated and assessed using statistical tools. The data acquired from primary sources were evaluated and interpreted using several statistical techniques utilised in social science research, including univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis.

1. **The Reliability Test using Cronbach's Alpha**

The link between the variables was measured using appropriate bivariate and multivariate analyses, which were then used to evaluate the theoretical model and analyse the measurement model using the SEM model.

2. **Analysis by Percentages**

Analysis by percentages was utilised to comprehend the demographic traits and social and economic factors of the scheduled tribes. The frequency and proportions of each study component, such as social and economic indicators- area, type of family, ownership of the house, number of children, beliefs in customs and traditions, annual income, Debt, borrowings, size of land, type of ration card, awareness of schemes, satisfaction level on schemes, and degree of changes in economic life were also evaluated at the same time.

3. Descriptive Analysis

In a descriptive analysis, the terms "mean," "minimum," "maximum," and "standard deviation" have been used to describe the degree of agreement among scheduled tribe communities regarding sources of income, expenditure, general problems, problems in education, problem in health, challenges, awareness, satisfaction on government programmes, reaction on reservation policies, benefits of government schemes and changes in the status of life. The average, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of each component have been determined for this analysis using SPSS software.

4. Fisher's Exact Test or Chi-Square Test

The chi-square test and Fisher's exact test are used to ascertain the relationship or association between two variables, such as annual income and demographic characteristics, the method of borrowing, the cause of debts, savings, type of ration card, the total size of the land, illness, and the extent of changes in economic life.

5. Friedman Test

To compare the ranks between variables, the Friedman test calculates the mean ranks across cases. It was used to determine the average ranking between expenditures on food items, children's education, entertainment, social function, purchase of material for home and maintenance, household expenses, house rent, medical treatment, buying cloth and items for family members, and alcohol with Koraga, Malekudiya and Marati scheduled tribe communities.

6. Correlation

The statistical metric known as correlation describes the strength and nature of a relationship between two or more variables. This method helps establish a possible relationship between the variables. If a correlation is found, it may be found to be either positive or negative. This analysis examines the direction of the relationship between awareness, income, expenditure, savings, Debt, and improved living conditions among the Koraga, Malekudiya, and Marati scheduled tribe communities.

7. Independent Sample t-test

The means of only two groups—neither more nor less—have been compared using the independent samples t-test. Typically, this test is used to compare two population means and determine if they differ. This procedure is an inferential statistical hypothesis test since it uses samples to infer information about populations. The independent samples t-test is also known

as the two-sample t-test. In this study, an independent t-test was used to analyse the mean differences between awareness, income, expenditure, savings, and Debt. It improved living conditions among the Koraga, Malekudiya, and Marati Scheduled Tribe communities.

8. One-way ANOVA

If there is statistical evidence that the connected population means are statistically substantially different, one-way ANOVA ("analysis of variance") compares the means of multiple independent groups. One of the parametric tests is the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study used one-way ANOVA to evaluate research hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 8 by comparing the significant differences between the different demographic characteristics, which include more than two groups, about government schemes, awareness, income, expenditure, savings, Debt, and improved living conditions, economic status, general problems and challenges faced by the scheduled tribes.

9. Simple Regression Analysis

A fundamental regression analysis is essentially a statistical technique that uses past observations to quantify the relationship between a single independent factor and one dependent variable. We investigate the relationship between the single independent variable and the dependent variable in the basic linear regression model. The term "simple linear regression model" is frequently used to describe a linear regression model with only one independent variable. The simple regression analysis has been utilised in the current study to examine the impact of government schemes on the socio-economic empowerment of the scheduled tribes.

10. Multivariate Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression is a statistical technique used to determine the linear relationship between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable. Due to the connection between the variables, the relationship is perceived as linear. To determine the influence of awareness and utilisation of government schemes among the scheduled tribes on socio-economic empowerment, government intervention on socio-economic status, and the impact of Discrimination on socio-economic empowerment, a multivariate regression analysis was employed in the current study.

11. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Path Analysis

SEM, a multivariate statistical analysis method, is used to look at the structural relationships between quantifiable variables and latent components. Path analysis is used to quantify the

causal relationships between the constructs. To ascertain how the awareness and utilisation of various government schemes among the Scheduled Tribes positively influence their socio-economic empowerment, the current investigation examined government intervention about socio-economic status and how Discrimination among the Scheduled Tribes dampens utilisation and socio-economic empowerment.

The explanation above demonstrates the validity and reliability of the research methods employed for this study. A comprehensive statistical analysis was required for the study to ensure the validity and calibre of the data. A major component of analysing and interpreting survey data is the use of statistical tools. Statistical tests and analyses are necessary to identify correlations between specific attributes that have been investigated. To investigate the links between various parameters, several statistical studies were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer, which was employed to generate a correlation and determination matrix.

13. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The present study was carried out in the Dakshina Kannada district. The Dakshina Kannada district is surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the west and is bordered by the Udupi and Kamala taluks of the Udupi district on the North, the Sakaleshpur taluk of the Hassan district on the East, the Madikeri and Somawarapet taluks of the Kodagu district on the southeast, and the Kannur district of Kerala State on the South. As per the 2011 Census, the district of Dakshina Kannada spans 4,861 square kilometres, accounting for 2.53% of the state's total land area. It is split into 551 sq km for urban areas and 4310 sq km for rural areas. According to recent administrative reports, the district has five major taluks: Bantwal, Belthangady, Mangaluru, Puttur, and Sullia. The 2011 census report shows that the total population of Dakshina Kannada district is 2,089,649, comprising 1,084,017 rural and 1,005,632 urban populations. It is found that the population in the rural area (51.87%) is greater than in the metropolitan area (48.12%) of the district. The district administrative work is managed by the zilla panchayat, followed by taluks, taluk panchayats, and village-level grama panchayats. At present, 286 VA circles, 17 Hobbies, and 223 Gram panchayats are established in the Dakshina Kannada district. Dakshina Kannada district ranks first in literacy rate and provides quality education. This increased literacy rate shows the quality and standard of the district. According to the 2011 census report, the total district literacy rate is 88.57%.

Fallow land, 11774 hectares (2.5 per cent), net-cultivated area, 1.31 lakh ha (28 per cent), and total area, 1.31 lakh ha (27 per cent). Approximately 42.5% of the land area is either uncultivable or unsuitable for cultivation.

The district is primarily home to Koragas, Malekudiyas, and Marati Naikas, who are Scheduled Tribe Communities. The Koragas are recognised as the indigenous people of the former district of Dakshina Kannada. They differ significantly from other residents of the district in terms of customs, cultural practices, and lifestyle. Procedures. Malekudiyas and Marati Naiks are the district's other two Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities. The Malekudiyas are primarily found on the outskirts of the Western Ghats in Belthangady and Sullia Taluks. The district has a relatively small population. They labour on plantations and as cultivators. Goan origins are shared by Marati Naiks, who have historically served in the army. They arrived as soldiers and eventually made themselves at home. Many regions within the district. The Marati Naiks are industrious labourers who rely primarily on farming. In terms of social hierarchy, they outperform the other two tribes. Based on available tribal communities and the basis of a development perspective, the Dakshina Kannada district is selected.

14. SOFTWARE USED

This study utilised a variety of research database software and heavily relied on cutting-edge statistical methods, incorporating data and facts. Specifically, IBM SPSS Statistics 21, IBM AMOS 21, Microsoft Excel 2010, and Mendeley were utilised in this study. The IBM SPSS 21 program is used for conducting descriptive and inferential analyses, where various analyses, including chi-square tests, t-tests, ANOVA, regression analysis, descriptive statistics, normality checks, simple correlations, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and others, have been employed. IBM SPSS 21 software is utilised. Path diagrams have been created using IBM AMOS 21 in conjunction with confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling.

15. LIMITATIONS

The research study has several limitations, including time constraints, limited financial resources, and the availability of primary and secondary data. This study focused on the conditions of Scheduled Tribes in Dakshina Kannada district, particularly regarding the Marati Scheduled Tribes. Despite the limitations listed above, sincere and honest efforts will be made to ensure the study is systematic and practical.

16. CHAPTER'S SCHEME

The research study titled "Socio-Economic Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes: A Comparative Study in Dakshina Kannada District.**",** is coordinated in six Chapters as detailed below.

CHAPTER – I	:	**"INTRODUCTION"** presents an overview of the subject matter of the research study by clearly detailing the conceptual framework, need for the present study, research questions, objectives, and hypotheses. In addition, this Chapter will outline the methods, sources, and tools used for data collection, the scope and limitations of the present study, and the chapter scheme.
CHAPTER – II	:	**"THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE"** outlines the theoretical foundation of inclusive policy education and social and economic empowerment and provides a detailed review of earlier research studies conducted in this field of knowledge.
CHAPTER– III	:	**"PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE DESCRIPTION"** provides the profile of the study area - physical, demographic, socio-economic, and sample Description.
CHAPTER – IV	:	**"SCHEDULED TRIBES IN DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT AND GOVERNMENT SCHEMES "** provides a critical discussion about the total scheduled tribes communities in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka in India. This Chapter also discusses the various targeted programmes initiated for the upliftment of tribes.
CHAPTER – V	:	**"DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION"** This chapter presents research findings as well as an empirical study of primary data regarding the socio-economic status of the scheduled tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district.
CHAPTER – VI	:	**"SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION"** outlines the key economic implications for improving the overall efficacy of government programs on tribal empowerment, as well as a recap of the study findings and comments presented in the previous chapters. Finally, the Chapter concludes by providing directions for further research in this field of study.

17. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted to compare the level of socio-economic empowerment among the Marati tribe. The findings of the present study can help in understanding the economic empowerment of various tribes in this region and will also provide data related to these tribes for future research. The proposed study may provide guidelines for framing targeted policies and proper implementation of government schemes related explicitly to the Scheduled Tribes. The research's expected output can be beneficial as it is a grassroots-level study.

This study will help to understand how socio-economic deprivation and Discrimination contribute to social and economic exclusion. The study will help design an inclusive approach in society to promote economic empowerment, which will also contribute to social empowerment, a crucial component of democracy.

18. KEY FINDINGS

This chapter shows the findings of the research study on "Socio-Economic Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes: A comparative study in Dakshina Kannada District" within the framework of socio-economic empowerment. The present study attempted to analyse the economic empowerment, performance of government schemes, and discriminatory practices among the scheduled tribes of Dakshina Kannada district in various situations. The study was conducted in the Dakshina Kannada district, which encompassed three taluks. The total sample size of the study is 800. Out of 400, there are Marati tribes, 200 Koraga tribes, and 200 Malekudiya tribes. The study relies on both primary data and secondary data. The study aims to analyse the socio-economic condition of the scheduled tribes across subcastes in Dakshina Kannada district, to understand the various facilities provided by the Government for the development of the scheduled tribes, to analyse the impact of developmental activities on scheduled tribes welfare, and to conduct a comparative study of various groups of scheduled tribes in Dakshina Kannada district. The primary data mainly relates to education, type of house, occupation, income, savings, consumption, land, health, and government schemes. The study primarily focuses on the socio-economic empowerment aspects, with the significant findings and suggestions presented below.

18.1 FINDINGS FROM THE SECONDARY DATA

- According to the 2011 secondary data census report, out of the 6.11 crore population of Karnataka state, only 6.95% (42,48,987) are from Scheduled Tribe communities, and the state has recognised 50 Scheduled Tribe communities in different districts. In the Dakshina Kannada district, there are 3.93% (82,268) of the total population, which is 0.13%, who are scheduled tribes living in different parts of the district. The scheduled tribe population is distributed more in Bantwal (25.41%) and Puttur (21.42%) Taluks.
- There are three scheduled tribes found mainly in different parts of the Dakshina Kannada district. Out of the total population of scheduled tribes in Dakshina Kannada district, the Koraga tribes, who constitute 5.90% of the Scheduled Tribe population, are settled, with a higher concentration in Mangalore Taluk (70.11%). The Malekudiya tribes contribute 9.34% of the population. They settled more in the Belthangady (74.83%) region. The Marati scheduled tribes are settled comparatively more (84.75%). They distributed more in Bantwala (28.56%) and Puttur (24.03%) regions.
- The total sex ratio in Dakshina Kannada district in 2001 was 1022 females for every 1,000 males, whereas it was 965 in the state, and in 2011, it was 1020 females for every 1,000 males. Here, the study observes a decadal decline (-2) in the size of the sex ratio in the district as well as in the state of Karnataka.
- The overall literacy rate of Karnataka state during 2011 was 75.4 per cent, and Dakshina Kannada's literacy rate was 88.57 per cent. Notably, the literacy rate of scheduled tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district in 2011 was 75.91%.
- The total percentage of Marginal land holdings among scheduled tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district during the year 2011 is only 5.32%. The small land holdings comprise 5.81%, Semi-Medium land holdings are 2.56%, medium-sized land holdings are 0.68%, and there are no tribes with extensive land holdings. The secondary data further indicates that the share of different categories of land holdings among other communities exceeds 85% within the district, clearly showing the domination of other communities in land holdings.
- As per the secondary data of the census of 2011, the total workforce in Dakshina Kannada district is only 47.74% but the total share of the workforce of the scheduled tribe is much less, i.e 12.16%

- It is observed that the total workforce of scheduled tribe communities in the district is only 45,833. Out of the total scheduled tribe communities' workforce, 41,606 (90.77%) are Main workers, and the remaining 4,227 (9.22%) are Marginal workers.
- Secondary data evidence indicates that 74.81% of people in the Dakshina Kannada district are engaged in occupations other than their primary occupation. 18.86% of tribes engage in household activities, and only a few (2.93%) tribes engage in agriculture as labourers and cultivators (3.4%).
- The secondary data provide evidence that the number of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries of agricultural schemes in Dakshina Kannada district increased from 40 in 2018 to 6,787 in 2021. It further declined to 16 in 2022.
- According to the secondary data, the number of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries from horticulture schemes is very low, with only 48 tribes benefiting from these schemes in 2019 in the Dakshina Kannada district. This is the highest number of beneficiaries recorded, and the numbers for the remaining years are significantly lower.
- In Dakshina Kannada district, the number of scheduled tribe beneficiaries has increased from 22 in 2017 to 2337 in 2022 under the Animal Husbandry schemes.
- The Dakshina Kannada district is renowned for its fisheries. The Government of Karnataka have introduced many special schemes to encourage fisheries in this region. However, available secondary data reported that the number of tribal beneficiaries in fisheries schemes is minimal.
- Secondary evidence suggests that the number of tribal beneficiaries from the Gangakalyana scheme in Dakshina Kannada district increased from 7,125 in 2015 to 11,452 in 2019. From 2020 onwards, the number of beneficiaries started to decline.
- The transportation schemes in the Dakshina Kannada district impacted only 1,372 scheduled tribes in 2021. For the rest of the years, no tribes benefited from this scheme.
- According to secondary data, it is observed that rural development schemes have had a limited impact on the Scheduled Tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district. As evidence of this, the secondary data show a decrease in the number of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries from 206 in 2015 to 3 in 2022.
- According to the secondary data, in Dakshin Kannada district, tribal beneficiaries for forest schemes were found in only 2017 (41) and 2018 (1).
- A year-wise figure indicates a significant increase in scheduled tribe beneficiaries in Dakshin Kannada district for the scheme Cooperation. The number has increased from

21 in 2017 to 1,618 in 2020. Then again, it started to decline from 788 in 2021 to 133 in 2022.

- The secondary data indicate that the number of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries in Dakshina Kannada increased from 199 in 2015 to 272 in 2019 for schemes related to women and child development. The number of beneficiaries declined from 2020 to 2022.
- The revenue schemes in Dakshina Kannada have had little impact on the Scheduled Tribes. In other words, the scheduled tribes from the Dakshina Kannada region have derived minimal benefit from the schemes above. The secondary source data indicate that fewer than 100 beneficiaries were reported from 2016 to 2021.
- The number of scheduled tribe beneficiaries for the housing scheme in Dakshina Kannada district has increased from 946 in 2015 to 269 in 2018. Then, after years, the number of beneficiaries declined.
- The secondary data indicate that skill development schemes have had little impact on the scheduled tribes of the Dakshina Kannada district. The number of beneficiaries has decreased over the years.
- Secondary data shows that schemes such as Higher Education Schemes, small-scale industry schemes, minor irrigation schemes, Labour schemes, and energy schemes have not covered scheduled tribe beneficiaries from the Dakshina Kannada district.

18.2 FINDINGS FROM THE PRIMARY DATA

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- Out of 800 sample households, 54.12 per cent of respondents are males, and 45.87 per cent of respondents are females. Correspondingly, out of 400 samples, Marati household males and females account for 56 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively. Out of 200 samples of Malekudiya households, 51.5 per cent of respondents are males, and 48.5 per cent of respondents are females. From a sample of 200 Koraga respondents, 53% are male, and 47% are female. The gender status indicates that the majority of the families in the sample, including those of the Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga, are headed by males. Only a few families in those communities are headed by females.
- The study identifies that out of 800 scheduled tribe sample households, 36.9 per cent of respondents are in the 36-45 years age group, and 31.5 per cent of respondents are in the 46 -55 years age group. 24.5 per cent of respondents are in the 18 to 35 years age

group. Only 7.1 per cent of sample respondents are elders (more than 56 years). Among the 400 Sample Marati households, 27 per cent of respondents are age group of 18 to 35 years, 36.8 per cent are age group of 36 to 45 years, 26.8 per cent are age group of 46 to 55 years and the remaining 9.5 per cent of the respondents are age group of the above 56 years. Among the 200 Koraga tribes, 18.5 per cent of the respondents are in the 18-35 age group. Thirty-six per cent of respondents are in the 36 to 45 years age group. 39.5 per cent of the respondents are in the 46- to 55-year age group, and the remaining 6 per cent are above 56 years of age. Among Malekudiya tribes 25.5 per cent are age group of 18 to 35 years, 38 per cent of respondents are age group of 36 to 45 years, 33 per cent of respondents are in the age group of 46 to 55 years and only 3.5 per cent of the respondents are found the above the age group of more than 56 years.

- The primary data revealed from 800 sample tribal households that 35.2 per cent of sample scheduled tribes are illiterates, 26.2 per cent of the sample respondents have primary education, 17.8 per cent of the respondents have secondary education, 14.1 per cent of the respondents have undergraduate education, 5.5 per cent of respondents having the education of the post-graduation and only a few respondents are in the research field. Correspondingly, it is found that among the sample, Koraga respondents are more illiterate (56.5 per cent) than the Marati tribe sample respondents (24 per cent) and the Malekudiya sample respondents (36.5 per cent). Primary education was highly represented (31.5 per cent) among the Malekudiya sample respondents, followed by the Koraga sample respondents (25 per cent) and the Marati sample respondents (24.2 per cent). Secondary education among Marati and Malekudiya sample respondents is 19.5 per cent, and among Koraga sample respondents is 12.5 per cent. Undergraduate literacy is high (21 per cent) among the Marati sample respondents. Graduate education is only 10 per cent among the Malekudiya sample tribes, which is a much lower percentage than the Koraga sample respondents (4.5 per cent). Only 9.5 per cent of Marati sample respondents have post-graduation education. Koraga and Malekudiya sample respondents have only 1.5 per cent of PG education. Only very few (1.8 per cent) have research knowledge of the sample Marati respondents.
- More than 74 per cent of Marati sample respondents are married, 17.5 per cent are unmarried, 7 per cent are widows, and 1.5 per cent are divorced. More than 60.5 per cent of Koraga sample respondents are married, 25 per cent are unmarried, 13.5 per cent are widows, and 1 per cent are divorced. Among Malekudiya's sample respondents,

62.5 per cent are married, 27 per cent are unmarried, 9.5 per cent are widows, and only 1 per cent are divorced.

- The study found that the number of unemployed or homemakers is considerably lower among the sample Marati tribes (28.6 per cent) than among the Malekudiya sample respondents (37 per cent) and the Sample Koraga respondents (32 per cent). The majority of the Marati (40.9 per cent) sample respondents depend on agriculture and animal husbandry. Followed by Koraga Sample respondents (23 per cent) and Malekudiya (22 per cent). Koraga sample respondents highly (28.5 per cent) work in the unorganised sector. 27.5 per cent of Malekudiya sample respondents work in the Unorganised sector. Only 13.8 per cent of the Marati sample respondents work in the unorganised sector, which is less than the Koraga and Malekudiya tribes. Sixty-three per cent of Marati tribes are involved in business activities; however, the business activity rate among the Malekudiya (1 per cent) and Koraga (0.5 per cent) sample respondents is very low. Organised sector employment among the Marati tribe sample is 10 per cent, among the Malekudiya is 3 per cent, and among the Koraga sample households is 2.5 per cent.
- The study discovered that, still, 7.2% of the scheduled tribe families live in kaccha houses. The highest 70.5 per cent of the Koraga and 67 per cent of the Malekudiya tribe live in Semi-pukka houses. The percentage of Marati (35%) tribes is higher in the living of Pukka houses than the Koraga (16.55%) and Malekudiya tribes (23%)
- The majority of the scheduled tribe families own the houses, with most (11.5%) of the Koraga tribe houses being provided through government schemes. 9.2% of the Marati tribes live in temporary huts, which is more than that of the Koraga and Malekudiya tribes.
- Out of 200 sample sizes from the Koraga tribe, 7.5% do not have toilet facilities, and out of 200 samples from the Malekudiya tribe, 6.0% do not have separate toilet facilities. The lack of individual bathroom facilities remains prevalent among the Marati (0.2%), Koraga (4.5%), and Malekudiya (0.5%) communities. Most of the scheduled tribe houses in the sample were not fully electrified, and the highest 14.5% of the Korga tribes did not use cooking gas, which is higher than the Marati (7.2%) and Malekudiya (8%) groups. This highlights the lack of access to basic amenities among the scheduled tribes in the Dakshina Kannada district.

Objective 1: To examine the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Tribes across sub-castes in the study area.

- According to the primary data, it is evident that the majority of the scheduled tribe households in the sample (60.8%) reside in urban areas. Comparatively, 75.2% of the Marati households in the sample live in urban areas, which is more than those of the Koraga (41.5%) and Malekudiya (51.0%) in the study area.
- More than 71 per cent of the Marati tribes in the study area have a nuclear family system, which is comparatively higher than that of the Koraga (51.5%) and Malekudiya (47.5%) scheduled tribes. Overall, 60.2% of the scheduled tribe sample followed the nuclear family system.
- According to the primary data, the majority of Scheduled Tribe households (33.1%) have two children. Notably, the Marati tribe household has 39.2%, the Sample Koraga household tribe has 25% and the Malekudiya Tribe household has 29%. This illustrates the shifting family preference of the Scheduled Tribes towards the nuclear family system.
- According to primary data, around 54.5% of Marati households, 25% of Koraga households, and 37.5% of Malekudiya tribes strongly believe in their traditions and customs. With this result, it is understood that the Marati tribe has not entirely abandoned its belief in customs and rituals to a greater extent than the Malekudiya and Koraga tribes.
- Furthermore, the results revealed that the enrollment of the sample scheduled tribes in the self-help group is significantly lower (32.2%). In detail, the enrollment of the Marati scheduled tribe in the Self-Help group is slightly higher (37.5%) than that of the sample Koraga tribes (36.5%) and the Malekudiya Tribe (17.5%). This suggests a lack of awareness about the benefits of self-help groups among the Scheduled Tribe communities in the Dakshina Kannada district.
- The majority of the Scheduled tribe community members have joined their community group in the study area. Approximately 72.8% of the Marati tribes have joined the community group, around 59.5% of the Malekudiya tribe have joined their community group, and the majority (46.5%) of the Koraga tribe have not joined their community group.

- Membership of scheduled tribes in clubs and formal and informal associations is very low. This suggests a lack of interest among tribes in forming significant associations for their development.
- The economic status among Marati (M = 2.66, SD ± 0.54) was found to be comparatively higher than among Malekudiya (M = 2.65, SD ± 0.57) and Koraga (M = 2.43, SD ± 0.51). The scheduled tribes in Dakshina Kannada agreed that they earn more income through daily wages and bank deposits.
- According to primary data, most of the sample Koraga (37.5%) and Malekudiya (37.0%) tribes in the study area come under the income category of 50001 to 100000. However, the majority of the sample Marati Scheduled Tribe members (33.8%) have an income level between ₹100,001 and ₹500,000. The Marati scheduled tribes have a comparatively higher income level than the Koraga and Malekudiya communities.
- It is found that 81.1% of scheduled tribes borrow loans. In particular, it is found that the Koraga sample tribes (87.0%) have borrowed more loans than the Marati (81.2%) and Malekudiya (75.0%) scheduled tribes.
- From the primary data, it is understood that Scheduled Tribes in the sample study area prefer government Banks (34.37%) and Cooperative banks (21.87%) for borrowing loans. From this, it is evident that the sample Marati, Koraga, and Malekudiya tribes in the study area place more importance on institutional channels than on non-institutional channels.
- The study found that nearly 20.5% of the sample Marati tribes took loans for the purpose of repaying existing loans and purchasing vehicles (12.75%). The highest 24 per cent of the Koraga tribes borrowed loans to repay the already taken loans. However, nearly 15.37% of the Malekudiya tribes took loans for the construction of houses.
- The primary result shows that among Marati scheduled tribes, the monthly savings amount is less than Rs 1000; among the Koraga, nearly 48% save less than Rs 1000. More than 37% of the Malekudiya tribes' monthly savings are less than Rs. 1000. This suggests that, knowingly or unknowingly, the scheduled tribes save very little.
- It is important to note that the Below Poverty Line Card is more prevalent among the Koraga (85%) and Malekudiya (70%) tribes. Moreover, only 48.2% of the Marati tribe sample holds a Below Poverty Line card, which is considered a very low percentage compared to the Koraga and Malekudiya tribes.
- The primary data revealed that, overall, more than 40.87% of the scheduled tribe community in the study area had landholdings of less than 10 cents. Comparatively,

Koraga's small land holdings are higher than the small landholdings of the Malkekodiya and Marati tribes.

- The study area reveals only slight variations in expenditure patterns among the sampled scheduled tribes, indicating that they allocate a higher proportion of their budget to foodstuffs and household expenses. Compared to the Malekudiya tribes, the Marati and Koraga tribes have higher expenses on these items.

Objective 2: To Review the Government Schemes/Programmes for Scheduled Tribes by the Central Government and the State Government of Karnataka.

- The mean value is less than 3 for satisfaction with the tribal development programme among the sample scheduled tribes of the study area, which indicates that the Marati (M=2.99), Korga (M=2.96), and Malekudiya (M=3.01) are very dissatisfied with the development schemes. However, the Malekudiya tribes are comparatively more satisfied than the other tribes in the study area.
- The awareness level of welfare schemes among scheduled tribes indicates that the Malekudiya tribe is more aware than the Marati and Koraga tribes in the study area.
- It is important to note that the mean values of schemes such as irrigation, soil conservation, supply of agro-inputs, marketing of agricultural produce, supply of drinking water, and income generation programs are more than 3, indicating that the sample of scheduled tribes is highly satisfied with these schemes. However, they were dissatisfied with schemes such as credit facilities, road construction, education promotion, training and capacity building, and health initiatives.
- The study found that the satisfaction level of the scheduled tribes sample with the reservation facilities was. It indicates that they (Marati=3.45, Koraga=3.41, Malekudiya=3.22) were delighted with the reservation facility regarding financial assistance.
- All the sub-castes showed a high and positive view of the Basava Ashraya Yojana, with Marati (M=3.77, SD=1.50), Malekudiya (M=3.75, SD=1.71), and Koraga (M=3.75, SD=1.47) reporting similar results. Still, they showed very low agreement on the Dr BR Ambedkar Awas Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Marati M=1.63, SD=.97, Malekudiya M=1.50, SD=.69, Koraga M=1.19, SD=.52). Overall, the housing scheme is highly beneficial for Malekudiya tribes (M=2.20, SD ± 0.45) than the Marati respondents (M=2.14, SD ± 0.44) and Koraga respondents (M=2.10, SD ± 0.49).

- All the sub-castes showed a high and positive view of the Swarna Jayanti Swarojgar Yojana (Marati M=4.89, SD=.42, Malekudiya M=5.00, SD=.00, M=4.92, SD=.28). Still, they showed very low agreement on the Pradhan Mantri Kusal Vikas Yojana (Marati M=1.13, SD=.34, Malekudiya M=1.02, SD=.14, Koraga M=1.13, SD=.33). Overall, benefits of employment scheme among Malekudiya respondents (M=1.84, SD ± 0.20) is found to be comparatively higher than Koraga respondents (M=1.77, SD ± .20) and Marati respondents (M=1.78, SD ± 0.20).

- For the social development scheme incentive simple marriage, the mean values among the sample Marati tribes, M = 4.45; the Koraga tribe, M = 4.61; and the Malekudiya, M = 4.61. The mean value for the scheme is more than 3. By this, we can understand that the three scheduled tribe communities highly benefited from the scheme called Incentive to Simple Marriage.
- The study revealed benefits related to the health of the scheduled tribe sample. The primary data analysis shows that a minimal number of sample tribal families benefited from the Jyoti Sanjeevini Scheme and Janani Suraksha Yojana. By this, it should be understood that the scheduled tribes lack focus and consciousness regarding healthcare.

Objective 3: To analyse the impact of Government Schemes/Programmes on the Socio-Economic conditions of Scheduled Tribes across subcastes in the study area.

- The study reveals that government schemes have not brought about significant changes in the socio-economic lives of the scheduled tribes. The sub-castes, such as Marati, Malekudiy, and Koraga tribes, showed a high and positive view of the increase in their confidence level, easy access to hospitals and clinics, and a reduction in discriminatory practices. Moreover, they showed a lower agreement level on alcohol addiction and more benefits for their family members. It is understood that government schemes, implemented by both the central and state governments, have had a limited impact on the scheduled tribe families.
- It can be understood that there is no change in the income level of the scheduled tribe communities after they have utilised the government facility. Notably, the income level of the Koraga tribe (45.0%) remains unchanged compared to the Marati (41.0%) and Malekudiya (41.5%) tribes.

- Out of 800 sample households, 46.0% of the households' expenditure increased, despite the availability of many schemes. Compared to the Marati (45.2%) and Koraga (39.0%) tribes, Malekudiyas' household expenditure was significantly higher (54.5%).
- It was found that the highest 41.1% of sample households' saving status decreased in the sample area. Comparatively, the Koraga (42.0%) tribe's saving status decreased compared to the Marati (40.8%) and Malekudiya (41.0%) sample tribes.

4. To analyse the problems and challenges faced by the scheduled tribes in the study area.

- The study found that the scheduled tribes face numerous problems, which hinder their overall development. The primary data analysis of this study reveals that the mean values are high for the problems of unemployment and poverty, indicating that the scheduled tribes are severely affected by unemployment and poverty issues. Comparatively, the problems of unemployment and poverty are higher among the Koraga tribes (M = 3.26, M = 3.27) than among the Malekudiya (M = 3.10, M = 3.28) and Marati tribes (M = 3.01, M = 3.14).
- From the primary data, it is evident that a problem exists in the education of the scheduled tribe community. According to the analysis, factors such as a narrow mentality, a lack of understanding of the importance of education, and a belief in the value of work and earning an income have high mean values among the Koraga, Marati, and Malekudiya communities. The narrow mentality is more associated with the Malekudiya tribe (M = 3.09) and the Koraga tribe (M = 3.06) than with the Marati tribe (M = 3.03). The lack of importance placed on education is more highly associated with the Malekudiya tribe (M = 3.17) than with the Koraga tribe (M = 3.10) and the Marati tribe (M = 3.03). They believe that work and earning income are more closely associated with the Koraga tribes (M = 3.29) than with the Malekudiya tribes (M = 3.22) and the Marati Scheduled Tribes (M = 3.12).
- According to the study's findings, there is no evidence of discrimination practices experienced by the Marati tribes. However, discriminatory practices are experienced more by the Koraga and Malekudiya Tribes, such as rude behaviour of the neighbour, dignity reduction due to caste, indirect practice of untouchability, etc.
- It is observed that in the study area, the majority of Marati tribe households (M = 3.83) visit the hospital when they experience health issues. This is very low among the Koraga tribes (M = 3.72) and the Malekudiya Tribes (M = 3.66), indicating that the

Marati tribes were more conscious of their health than the Malekudiya and Koraga tribes.

18.3 KEY FINDINGS ON HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H_1. The socio-economic condition of the scheduled tribe community in the Dakshina Kannada district is not satisfactory.

According to the results, respondents reported a comparatively higher level of satisfaction with Income from Bank Deposits (M = 3.3288), followed by Daily (M = 3.2838), Gold/Silver (M = 3.1888), and Agriculture Land (M = 2.7000). However, they were highly dissatisfied with the Residential Building (M = 1.7650). Given that the p-value of all the items is less than 0.01 and the mean value is less than 3, we can conclude that the socio-economic condition of Schedule Tribes is significantly lower than the average satisfaction with socio-economic condition. The overall mean and standard deviation are 2.599±1.401. Therefore, the Socio-Economic condition of the scheduled tribe community in Dakshina Kannada district is not satisfactory, and H1 is accepted.

H_2: The level of awareness among Scheduled Tribe communities regarding government developmental schemes in the Dakshina Kannada district is not comprehensive.

According to the results, the statement that states they are aware of all the educational support schemes (M=2.9138) has a comparatively higher level of agreement compared to the other statements, which state they are aware of all the health schemes (M=1.8913) and all the housing schemes (M=1.4975). However, the awareness level is significantly low, i.e. less than 3. Given that the p-value of all the statements is less than 0.01, except for the statement that they are aware of all the educational support schemes ($p > 0.05$), we can conclude that the government developmental schemes in Dakshina Kannada district are significantly lower than the average awareness among Scheduled Tribe communities. The overall mean and standard deviation of 1.798±0.938 shows the low level of awareness among Scheduled Tribe communities regarding government developmental schemes in the Dakshina Kannada district. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

Moreover, the respondents who are Marati seem to have a moderate level of awareness about all educational support schemes (M = 2.9700) compared to Malekodiya ST communities (M = 2.9300) and Koraga ST communities (M = 2.7850). However, there is no significant difference in the level of awareness among the Marati, Koraga, and Malekodiya communities regarding

the majority of the Government's developmental schemes in Dakshina Kannada district (p > 0.05), except for employment generation schemes and social development programs.

H_3: The awareness and utilisation of various government schemes among the scheduled tribe community positively influence their socio-economic empowerment.

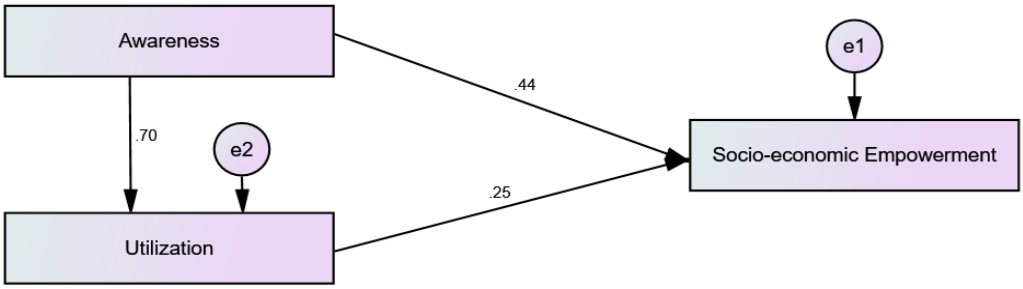


Figure 1 Direct Relationship

According to the results, it can be stated that awareness regarding government schemes among the scheduled tribe community has a positive influence on the utilisation of various government schemes among the STs and SCs (r = .701, p < .001). Moreover, it was also observed that awareness has an impact on Socio-economic Empowerment (E=.443, P <.001**), indicating that an increase in awareness of government schemes empowers the Socio-Economic condition among the respondents. Furthermore, utilisation also plays an essential role in improving socio-economic conditions among the respondents (E = .248, P < .001**). Therefore, H3 is accepted.

H_4: The socio-economic condition of the Marati tribe is better compared to that of the scheduled tribes.

According to the results, the Income (M = 2.1275) of the Scheduled Tribe communities is comparatively higher than their Savings (M = 2.0913) and Debt (M = 2.0888). However, the Expenditure of Scheduled Tribe communities (M=1.8425) is lower, which means they do not spend much on their expenses. Given that the p-value of all the statements is less than 0.01, we can conclude that the socio-economic condition is significantly lower than the average socio-economic condition among Scheduled Tribe communities. The overall mean and standard deviation are 2.037 ± 0.787.

Moreover, in terms of Income, Marati communities seem to have a comparatively higher income (M = 2.1700). Moreover, in terms of expenditure, the Malekodiya (M = 1.8550) appears to have relatively higher expenditure. Likewise, when Debt is considered, the Marati (M =

2.1600) communities seem to have relatively higher Debt. Overall, the socio-economic condition of the Marati communities is comparatively higher. However, there is no significant difference in the socio-economic condition of the Marati, Koraga, and Malekodiya communities (P > 0.05). Therefore, H4 is rejected.

H_5: Education, health, and economic hindrances among scheduled tribes negatively impact the utilisation of various government schemes.

In the case of education (β = -0.499), it is understood that for every one-unit increase in education, there is a 49.9% decrease in the utilisation of various government schemes. Whereas, for every one-unit increase in health, there is a 29.2% decrease in the utilisation of various government schemes. Likewise, for every one-unit increase in the economy, there is a 50.3% decrease in the utilisation of various government schemes. Therefore, it is proven that education, health, and economic hindrances among scheduled tribes negatively impact the utilisation of various government schemes, and as a result, H5 is accepted.

H_6: Discrimination among scheduled tribes dampens the positive relationship between Utilisation and Socio-economic Empowerment.

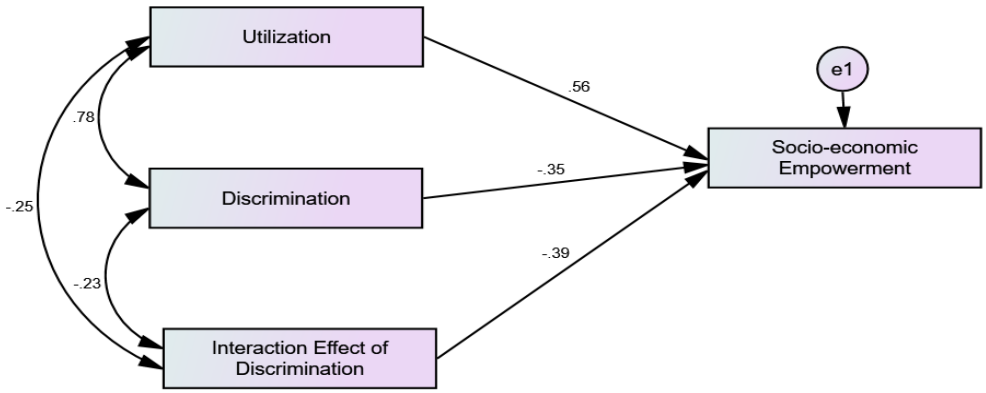


Figure 2: Effect of Discrimination

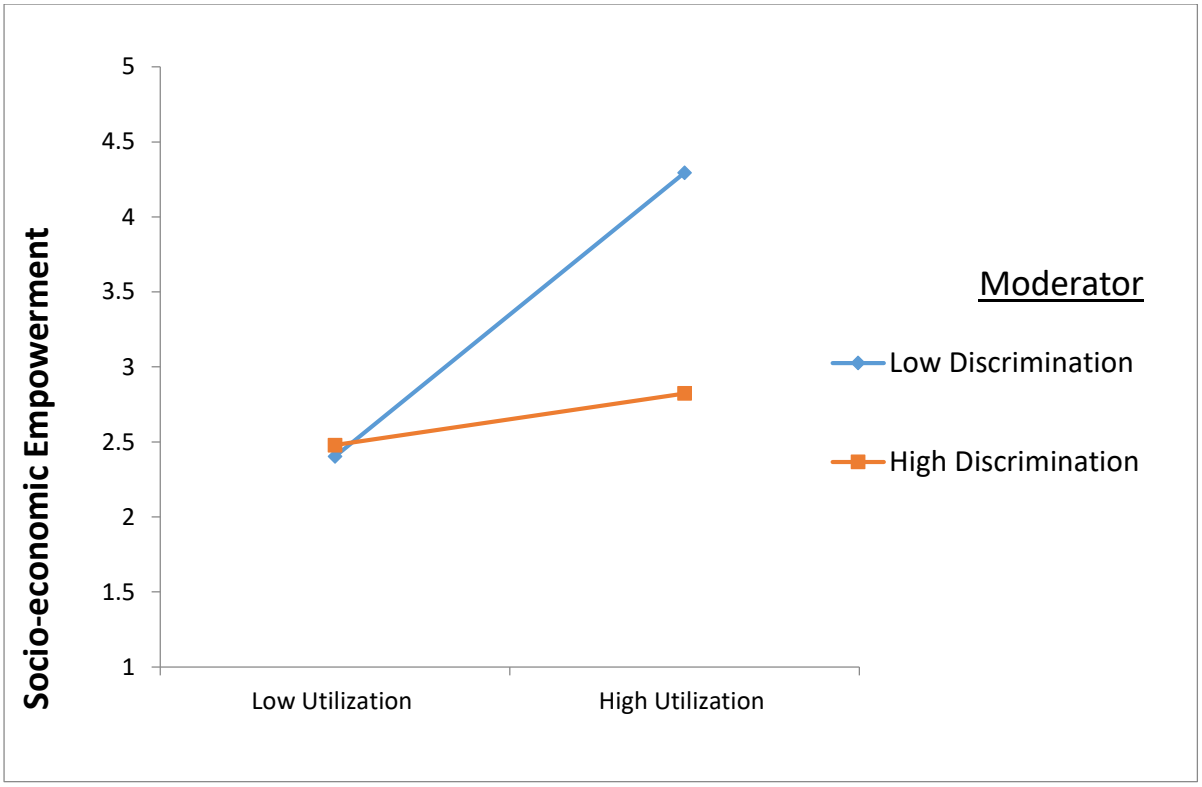


Figure 3: Moderating Role of Discrimination

The study examined the moderating role of Discrimination on the relationship between utilisation and socio-economic empowerment. The results revealed a negative and significant moderating impact of Discrimination on the relationship between utilisation and socio-economic empowerment (β = -0.387, t = -6.896, p = 0.000), supporting H6. As a whole, it is evident that Discrimination among scheduled tribes dampens the positive relationship between Utilisation and Socio-economic Empowerment.

19. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- To close the educational gap, particularly among the Koraga and Malekudiya tribes, there is a need to initiate peer-mentoring programs and mobile education units led by trained tribal youths.
- The majority of the Koraga, Malekudiya, and Koraga scheduled tribes in the study area are enrolled in community groups. It means there is a high influence of the community leaders on them. So that community leaders can encourage community members to benefit from various schemes and promote education among them.
- To promote inclusivity and relevance, incorporate tribal history, language, and culture into school curricula through the implementation of a culturally responsive curriculum.

- Creation of vocational training facilities that emphasise entrepreneurship, computer literacy, and contemporary agriculture for scheduled tribes by youth clubs, community groups and NGO's.
- According to the results, the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribes in Dakshina Kannada District are not satisfactory. Therefore, there is a need for the overall Socio-Economic conditions to be improved, and they should encourage involvement in income-generating activities.
- The economic status of the Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga tribal communities is very low, and their participation in income generation programmes and housing schemes is also below the average level. That tribe should be self-motivated and show an interest in participating in various growth programs to increase their economic status.
- The hypothesis testing conducted in this study clearly indicates that the level of awareness among Scheduled Tribes regarding Development Activities is limited, as they are not aware of the benefits provided by various agencies. Therefore, there is an urgent need to involve community leaders, local panchayat members, and Panchayat members from rural areas in creating awareness among the Scheduled Tribes.
- The financial condition of the major Scheduled Tribe communities remains poor, and they often borrow money for unproductive purposes. As a result, many tribal families are trapped in debt, primarily driven by consumption-related expenses. This cycle of unproductive borrowing hampers their economic progress within society. Therefore, it is essential to reduce such borrowings and promote financial literacy. Educated members of the community must take the initiative to guide less-informed or illiterate tribes about the availability of subsidised and low-interest loans.
- All the scheduled tribes in the study area have small landholdings, and some tribes have no landholdings at all. A minimum amount of land is required to meet the basic needs of life. Therefore, NGOs should conduct land surveys of tribal communities and draw the Government's attention to the landless tribes.
- As education is limited among the Scheduled Tribes, they also face difficulties in understanding the application process for various schemes. Thus, it is almost as important to train them in filling out the applications and also to make them understand the entire process of applying for various schemes for the Scheduled Tribes.
- The majority of the sample tribes' agreement on road construction for their colony is very low, indicating the failure of infrastructure facilities and the lack of access to

infrastructure schemes in tribal areas. Therefore, the village panchayat officer and elected panchayat members should take a special interest in securing grants from the Government for road construction.

- The hypothesis testing of the present study shows that awareness regarding government schemes among Scheduled Tribes has a positive influence on the utilisation of various government schemes. For awareness creation, it should be given more importance in rural areas, particularly for Scheduled Tribe women. If awareness is increased through SHGs, NGOs, and various government agencies, then it is possible to increase the utilisation of government schemes.
- To increase productivity, give small landowners financial aid and technical assistance.
- Superstitious beliefs are common in all scheduled tribe communities. The majority of the scheduled tribes in the study area strongly believe in their traditional practices and customs. It will not allow them to adapt to modern life and also prevent them from merging with other societies. The tribal youths can reduce this. They know their people will, and they can educate other tribes by performing drama, speeches, and practices.
- As the study found, the level of education among the scheduled tribe communities is low, and their health indicators are not up to the mark, particularly in the Korga community. The lack of education, health, and poor economic conditions hinder their utilisation of government schemes, negatively impacting their use. Therefore, the local government and community leaders should actively raise awareness of the importance of health and education among these tribes.
- Tribes such as the Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga in the study area strongly agreed that they face unemployment and poverty problems. This is a significant obstacle for tribes in employment. In this case, NGO and community leaders should organise self-employment training camps for youth tribes. This may help alleviate the problems faced by scheduled tribes.
- The comparative analysis with Scheduled Tribe communities in Dakshina Kannada district shows that Marathi tribes are comparatively better off than other tribes, such as the Malekudiya and Koraga. The present study suggests that local representatives and community leaders of these tribes, particularly the Koraga and Malekudiya, should be involved in community development activities.
- To promote involvement in local governance, implement leadership development programs and community outreach initiatives.

- Utilise Anganwadi Kendras as information hubs for welfare and government initiatives specifically designed for Scheduled Tribes.
- To enhance loan management and savings, offer financial literacy training to scheduled tribes, particularly the Koraga scheduled tribes.
- Discriminatory practices still exist, albeit indirectly, in tribal society. Compared to the Marati scheduled tribes, the Koraga tribes are victims of that. Even though they feel inferior in front of the upper caste, this has to be reduced. The Asha workers must locate Koragas and make an effort to integrate them into the mainstream. NGOs also take special care of them by providing possible facilities to prevent Discrimination.
- There is a need to actively involve Scheduled Tribe youths in capacity-building programmes to help them develop essential skills. Additionally, it is crucial to engage women in efforts to raise community awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol and tobacco consumption on health and family relationships.

20. CONCLUSION

The present study on the *Socio-Economic Empowerment of Scheduled Tribes: A Comparative Study in Dakshina Kannada District* provides a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the conditions faced by Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga tribal communities. Despite the constitutional safeguards, welfare policies, and targeted development schemes aimed at uplifting Scheduled Tribes, the empirical data gathered through both primary and secondary sources indicate that socio-economic empowerment among these communities remains uneven and insufficient. The findings reveal significant disparities in literacy, housing, employment, access to health services, and benefits from government schemes, with the Koraga tribe particularly lagging in most indicators. Though a substantial portion of the population has benefited from schemes such as housing and animal husbandry, the impact of skill development, revenue, and fisheries schemes has been minimal or inconsistent. Moreover, qualitative insights emphasise that deeply rooted issues, such as social exclusion, cultural marginalisation, and institutional apathy, continue to hinder inclusive development. While some progress is evident in terms of access to education and homeownership, particularly among the Marati and Malekudiya tribes, the pace and reach of empowerment remain limited by systemic gaps. It is, therefore, imperative that policies not only target economic indicators but also address entrenched social hierarchies and stigma that perpetuate marginalisation. The study underscores the need for a decentralised, participatory approach to development where

tribal voices are centred, local leadership is empowered, and policy frameworks are adaptive to tribal-specific socio-cultural realities. True empowerment lies not merely in policy formulation but in robust, accountable implementation and continuous evaluation. Only through sustained commitment and inclusive governance can the vision of socio-economic justice for the Scheduled Tribes be fully realised.

Furthermore, the study reveals a lesser-discussed but equally critical barrier to empowerment, the exclusion and Discrimination faced by Scheduled Tribe members within their communities. The study also noted that a lack of awareness and information about various provisions given by the Government through different schemes is leading to the Non-Utilisation of benefits. Lack of participation and interest in development activities is leading to self-isolation and feelings of inferiority among the tribes. Empowerment must begin from within through education, intra-community dialogue, social solidarity, and active grassroots participation. Unless Scheduled Tribes are equipped and encouraged to take ownership of their development journey, the goal of inclusive and sustainable empowerment will remain only partially fulfilled. The comparative analysis of the major Scheduled Tribes, such as Marati, Malekudiya, and Koraga, reveals that the Marati tribes have made a significant effort to empower themselves. In contrast, the Malekudiya and Koraga tribes have been left behind. This comparison also highlights disparities in empowerment within the tribes.

21. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While the current research has offered deep insights into the socio-economic conditions of select tribal groups in Dakshina Kannada, several areas merit further exploration. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal approach to track changes over time in response to evolving government policies and economic reforms. Moreover, comparative studies across districts or states could help reveal regional disparities and successful models of tribal development. Another promising area would be to assess the psychological dimensions of marginalisation, such as the effects of social stigma on educational aspirations or occupational mobility. Additionally, studies that integrate digital literacy, climate vulnerability, and migration trends among tribal populations would provide a more holistic and future-oriented understanding of empowerment. Incorporating participatory action research methods could also strengthen policy recommendations by ensuring tribal voices are central in shaping the agenda for their development.

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